THE Final Straw

A WEEKLY ANARCHIST SHOW

The Final Straw is a weekly anarchist and anti-authoritarian radio show bringing you voices and ideas from struggle around the world.

You can send us letters at:
The Final Straw Radio
PO Box 6004
Asheville, NC 28816
USA

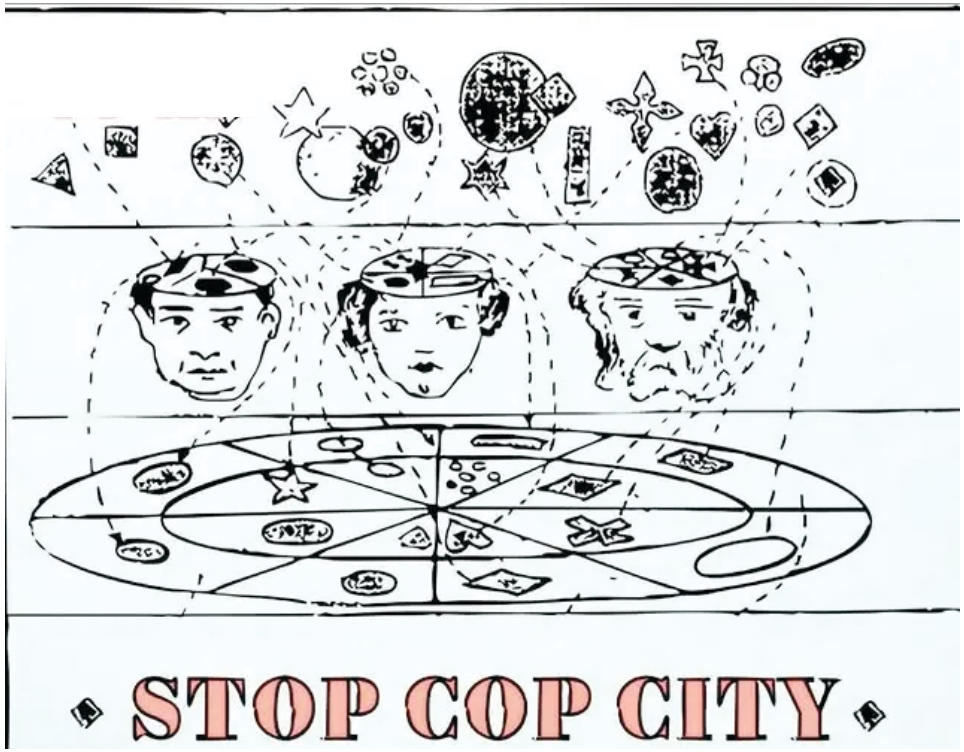
Email us at:
thefinalstrawradio@riseup.net
or **thefinalstrawradio@protonmail.com**

To hear our past shows for free, visit:
https://thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org

To support transcription and zine-making efforts which are funded by donations, visit:
https://thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org/donate/
or via Patreon:
https://www.patreon.com/tfsr
or via LiberaPay, which does not take a cut of the payments:
https://liberapay.com/The-Final-Straw-Radio/

Stop Cop City: Imaginary Crimes Tour

An Interview with The Final Straw Radio on March 30, 2025



it in the show notes, too, for listeners to check out and hopefully attend if they want to. Thank you both so much for being in this chat and taking the time. I hope it goes so well, and we're going to win.

Jordan: Thank you. I believe it.

TFSR: Clearly, repression is intended to chill individuals and the movements that they comprise. Do you have thoughts about how we find each other, build affinity, and hold strong against threats of injunctions, summonses, investigations, and surveillance that are bound to come anyway?

Selena: Yeah, one theme of this presentation is isolation and resisting isolation. Capitalism and life in the US are already so atomized, but add surveillance or charges, especially domestic terror charges, which 42 defendants are facing, and it can make you just want to curl up and watch Netflix, which every once in a while we need to do. But it's by getting better at letting your communities know what's going on, by denying the state the ability to work in the shadows, that we keep each other much safer.

Also, history shows that while there is a very real chilling effect when repression is high, there is also always a strong force of pushback. And so, as we said before, the state has its own risk assessment and wagers that they are making. If every time they snatch somebody or issue serious charges or murder somebody and all action ceases, then they know that they can do this again next time. They bet against our resiliency.

Jordan: Yeah, I've been so blown away by how my community has supported me through this terrible ordeal. When the indictment came out, I felt so scared and alone and worried that this would cause people to be scared to associate with me. Instead, people came over and brought me food. All sorts of people, including folks I barely knew, reached out and offered support through the indictment, going to jail, and the lengthy court stress. I've had all sorts of people had my back in big and small ways. I think this has been a strengthening and connecting thing for my community. We've thrown some extremely cool benefits. People have written charming songs and some really good memes. Every time that I've had to drive to Atlanta, which is a long drive, there's been people who come with me. It's funny: The state wants to criminalize association, but in response to these charges, so many people have made me feel more like I was a part of something, that I belonged, than I ever thought possible.

It seems like the tour is part of this. So many people I don't know in cities I've never been to are going to get together and talk about a lot of things, including how to support me, how to fundraise for me and my co-defendants, how to make sure a bunch of people come down to Atlanta for trial. It's just unbelievably sweet. And listeners, if you want to be part of this, you're invited. There are fundraising links and tour dates that I'm sure can be shared.

TFSR: Yeah, I'll definitely link to social media that has all that stuff and put

This week, we're sharing an interview with Selena who speaks about the "*Stop Cop City: Imaginary Crimes Tour*" and Jordan, a RICO defendant from the Stop Cop City 61 case. The two speak about anti-repression, about where the case is at right now and a wider view of resistance and support. The tour will be hitting over 60 cities (not all in the USA)

From their tour announcement:

61 people are facing RICO trials in Atlanta for alleged involvement in resistance to the construction of Cop City. The State uses imaginary associations and crimes, framed as RICO, as a means to break solidarity and momentum when movements are strong. Anti-repression is a response that uses an alternate imagination to strengthen solidarity and resistance.

In Spring 2025, a nationwide tour will visit over 60 cities to discuss the history of the Atlanta forest, the resistance to Cop City, history of RICO, ongoing legal updates and facilitate discussions on anti-repression and movement defense. Through this tour we aim to share the lessons we have learned across struggles, and adapt to the evolving repressive forces so that we can continue to move bravely together.

Stay updated here:

www.instagram.com/sccimaginarycrimestour/
linktr.ee/sccimaginarycrimestour
tinyurl.com/SCCImaginaryCrimesTourUpadates (announcements only signal chat)

If you want some more content on the struggle, check out a really interesting episode of Audio Interference (linked on the Final Straw episode page), a podcast associated with the Interference Archive in Brooklyn's Park Slope neighborhood featuring materials from and discussion of a September 2024 installation entitled "*Archiving Stop Cop City: This Is Not A Local Struggl*e"

To hear past episodes of ours on the Stop Cop City movement, check out the Final Straw's website.

Search for this interview title at **https://thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org/** to find links to further resources on this topic, featured music, the audio version, and files for printing copies of this episode.

Selena: I'm Selena. I use any pronouns, and I don't have any affiliations.

Jordan: I'm Jordan. I use they/them pronouns, and this isn't really an affiliation, but I am notably a RICO defendant.

TFSR: Of the 61 RICO defendants from the Defend the Forest case in Atlanta or Weelaunee, right?

Jordan: Yes, exactly.

TFSR: Cool. I mean, not cool, but we got that settled. [laughs] Can you give a summarized rundown of the Defend the Forest / Stop Cop City movement in so-called Atlanta or Weelaunee?

Selena: So the two names, Defend the Forest and Stop Cop City, both refer to the same mass decentralized movement to prevent the building of a police training facility in Atlanta that became known as Cop City. And I do just want to clarify here, we use the word movement a lot, but really, the terms Defend the Forest and Stop Cop City were calls made by people all over the world, obviously, most in the US, but [they] don't refer to any actual organization that anybody could belong to.

To give some context to Cop City itself, Cop City was proposed in the wake of the 2020 uprising following unrelenting police violence resulting in the murder of George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks, and many more. The State of Georgia has a relationship with the Israeli Defense Forces known as the GILEE program, which works like a foreign exchange program, where they can help train one another and exchange tactics. Cop City is a facility that features a mock city designed to look like a Palestinian or working-class American neighborhood and will serve as an important training base for police forces across the country and around the world.

So when we talk about the Stop Cop City or Defend the Atlanta Forest movement, this really kicks off when some locals find out about the plans to build Cop City, which happens in the spring of 2021, and soon word spreads, and there's regular information sessions in the area, cultural events in the public park, and that public park is a part of the land that was going to be taken down to build Cop City. For about three years, a lot of people took many different approaches to try to stop Cop City, all decentralized. People reading anonymous communique online, and in some of the list of things that took place to prevent Cop City, immediately, a lot of lawsuits are filed to challenge the proposal in the courts. When construction equipment eventually does move into the forest, it gets regularly sabotaged. There are weeks of action that bring hundreds and, at some point, a thousand people from across the country to the Atlanta Forest. There was a national pressure cam-

a little bit, but maybe that sparks more thoughts for you.

Jordan: Just to circle back to your question, anti-repression as prefiguration is a major theme of the tour. Anti-repression as a continuation of the movement. Use repression against the state to do things like expand mobilization, extend solidarity networks, take action quickly in response to repression, and share updates and scandalize state attacks. Communities that have developed relationships of care and accountability are most resilient to the strategies to divide. This looks like bail funds, prisoner and jail support, and preventative legal defense. Those are common tools, but people are creative.

I want people to understand that anti-repression is not simply a method of minimizing negative consequences but should be seen as an inherent part of movements and a force to propel movements or spread them in new directions. The shock of violence or the paranoia of surveillance can be isolating, or it can propel us to more action and connection, and that is determined by the choices that we make. Hopefully, the tour will inspire people to be creative and thoughtful about incorporating anti-repression into all sorts of movements in this national conversation.

Selena: Definitely. So not to harp too much on this idea of imagination, but there is something very special that happens when groups of people who care a lot get in the same room and talk about what's going on in their own cities, in their own communities. And we learn a lot from one another. For audience members, and hopefully for speakers as well, we hope to share perspectives of the repressive apparatuses so that we can all see it from its dimensions more wholly and get in a better position to stay safe and to challenge this power.

A definition of anti-repression put forward by this tour is not only of what we don't want, but just as Jordan said, it's also about the world that we do want. And I think there's something to be said about this upcoming trial, which, again, has not begun, that I really hope people take on and see as a responsibility that we have to these 61 people. I've heard it said that the movement is on trial via 61 people, so this looks like supporting your community member who's facing charges, and it also means sending a message. It means having conversations.

The state works best when it's quietly in shadows, but this fight against state domination and this rise of criminalization that we're going to see be used more and more against the most marginalized people and political movements, we're about to begin a trial where we have an opportunity in mass to push back against that. And so I hope that people also see this moment as a way to think creatively about how to support defendants and how to consider the upcoming trial as an opportunity.

or their friend and so really understanding what people are facing and trying to build out that support. There's also spectacular repression of people everywhere fighting for a free Palestine right now. Domestic terrorism especially has become a buzzword, or remains a buzzword right now, with fascist legislators. I think we're all following Mahmoud Khalil's kidnapping and detention, just to name one example of many. And I think there's a lot of lessons to be learned.

This presentation hopes to not only focus on Cop City but to really take the lessons from the people who have come before us and in other regions have learned about how to stay safe and how to push back on the rising state power. And so while using Stop Cop City as a reference point to share and develop a more robust anti-repressive analysis, we hope, and it's geared to, meeting everybody where they are right now in what do we do in this moment, not only to keep each other safe in the immediate but also stay safe long-term and build towards a world that we do want.

Jordan: At the end of the day, repression is about trying to create isolation and fear, so it's really cool to see folks putting together a national tour about creating connection, care, and bravery. During the course of this ordeal, there have been moments where I was really scared and feeling alone. Jail sucks. And that's why it's really important to have things like this tour, sharing the good word that we are stronger together, and also creating networks so many communities are linked and can support each other when hard times come.

Also, making sure that people learn the lessons of the Stop Cop City movement, not that it's over, but learn what people have learned so far, especially about repression and anti-repression. This is something that a lot of people have some familiarity with because when the police killed Tort, this struck a nerve nationally and globally, and people are still mourning this loss. And of all those mourning the loss of Tort, the vast majority did not know them personally, but all people concerned with liberation, protecting the planet, and protecting other people, anybody who has a sense of humanity was touched by Tort's story, and I think continuing to lift that up is really important.

TFSR: I've been hearing a lot of people talk about rediscovering what James C. Scott called Scott's Law of Anarchist Calisthenics from his first essay in the Two Cheers for Anarchism book. This idea that much like physical exercise should increase our agility and strength, we must start from where we can and increase our practices of disobedience, of thinking beyond the limits imposed by the rulers of our society in order to realize our goals and actualize our desires. How do this tour and these discussions prefigure and invite new forms of struggle to re-emerge? You've already talked about this

paign, which focused not on political targets but rather on the subcontractors that were funding Cop City, pressuring them to drop their contracts. There's famously an occupation in the forest, and a very popular referendum has not been passed. Actually, through very explicit voter suppression, it's not recognized.

In addition to things in Atlanta, there's also sabotage all over the country, and people are tagging things with Stop Cop City. There's a summit in Tucson at some point. And this just speaks to how this was an issue taken up beyond the City of Atlanta. Notably, Weelaunee Defense Society chapters all over the country are working together in their own cities to stop their own cop cities and the Atlanta Cop City. I'll just also note that at this point, Cop City in Atlanta is now fully constructed and currently in use, but we should know that the construction of Cop City was delayed for over two years. And while the number is not completely clear, it's estimated that the police spent about 20 million extra dollars just in delays and increased insurance premiums.

TFSR: You talked about all the different approaches that people took to challenging this through public referendums, through challenging elected officials, through putting pressure on insurers or construction companies or subcontractors that are working on this, and I'm sure banks that were funding it. And so there's a local aspect to the resistance. Like this is nearby a majority Black community in so-called South Atlanta that is directly affected by massive policing and by the prison industrial complex. There's also the ecological element on occupied land, this destruction of the forest, part of the lungs of the city, and a place where water seeps into the ground and filters. All these ecological reasons that are very much placed in the location are a part of this.

There's the international solidarity element, solidarity with folks in Palestine who are facing Israeli military, and the fact that those same trainings are happening with law enforcement around the US too, not just in Atlanta, and other departments from the US could participate in using this space. There are so many different overlaps that bring the local into the wider scope and cover so many different people's and communities' immediate interests as to why they would want this thing to not happen. The movement against Cop City in Atlanta is a really inspirational thing that a lot of people can grasp onto and find a reason to want to be engaged in.

Selena: Yeah, I think one of the reasons that this resonated so widely is how unique the Atlanta Cop City is. I think oftentimes people who struggle against the repressive forces in the world can run ourselves ragged at just how big and powerful the forces are that we are trying to fight against. The example of Stop Cop City in

Atlanta was a moment of a lot of people who didn't live in Atlanta, including people who did, but the whole country and the whole world being like, "Okay, this is going on where I live, too." If all of us focused on one intersection of all of these forces, like you said, militarizing police forces of both the US and Israel, we should also expect other states' police forces to get a piece of this pie, the destruction of a forest that actually keeps Atlanta livable.

I don't have the paperwork in front of me, but with the destruction of this forest, the water and the air take years off of how much longer people will be able to live in Atlanta. And then, of course, the gentrifying forces in a majority Black neighborhood. These are things that I think everyone anywhere can relate to. And I have been really moved to see people being like, "Oh, it's not an either/or." Not to be too cheesy, but when we come together and focus on one thing with the intention of having a real effect, we can not only gain power and get closer to a world that we actually want to live in, but also we're better positioned for what we're facing in our own neighborhoods if we don't happen to live in that neighborhood itself.

An example of this, what I think a lot of people are talking about now, is the Cop City proposals, I think there's about one for each state, and a lot of them have actually been either postponed or completely canceled because they have seen how costly and how politically disadvantageous it is to propose something like this. So, even looking at different states' Cop City proposals, the example that was set in Atlanta has had a very real, practical effect on the threat of this happening elsewhere.

TFSR: It's like turning the chilling effect around on them. Could you all explain a bit about the 61 RICO cases, the demand for a speedy trial, and where the legal process appears to be around the case at this moment?

Selena: Yeah. I just need to say up front that I am not a lawyer. I've never been to law school. In September 2023, the RICO indictment drops, and RICO stands for Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act. It's important to note that this is Georgia RICO law and not federal RICO law. I won't get too into that, but I do just want to clarify.

This groups 61 people together. Some of these 61 defendants have charges related to Stop Cop City. Some don't have any charges related to Stop Cop City but have charges dating back to 2020. The majority of these defendants did not know each other before the indictment, and now they only know each other's names as co-defendants listed in the indictment. We should see this case not as an exception but as a furtherance of the states pushing how far they can expand criminal law.

RICO is a narrative-based prosecutorial tactic that was originally designed to prosecute mobs or financial gangs, with the key being racketeering. So this is

used, but instead, the prosecutors were given free rein by judges in these hearings to talk about what they saw as scary movements nationwide, literally talking about the Autonomous Zone in Seattle, the Line 3 movement, 2020 uprisings in Minneapolis, and so on. All of these things are entirely irrelevant but were effectively used to deny people's bonds early on. Then, we saw this take a different form when the RICO indictment came.

And so, all of these imaginary lines that the state is drawing in this indictment and in their prosecution, we don't accept. They are not fact-based. They are the state trying to prosecute this boogeyman that they have invented. Moreover, as I've said previously, RICO is based on association, but the prosecution cannot say that any of these people knew each other. They cannot cite a real organization that anyone is a part of because it does not exist. They know that this case is weak, and they argue that association is vaguely anarchism itself, and it's a very circular logic of, "Well, we charged you, and so, therefore, you're all associated because we charged you, and because you're associated, you are in conspiracy."

Also, the indictment talks about political orientations, anarchism, anti-authoritarianism, and so on. It's also the imagination itself that is on trial. It is thinking thoughts. It is imagining a different world. It is imagining a world that does not have cop cities or the need for cop cities. It is this imagining that is on trial.

TFSR: So touring the country and beyond to spark this conversation in local contexts seems like a lot of work, which is what something that the Imaginary Crimes Tour is doing, but I could see it definitely bearing a lot of fruit, particularly since there are so many cop city campuses being planned and built and resisted across the territories, and also because so many of these diverse people that are being pulled into, say, the case of the 61 RICO defendants are from various parts of the country. So I wonder if you could talk a bit about the tour, what some of the stops are, and the conversation that you're hoping to spark around anti-repression with that.

Selena: The fight to stop Cop City in Atlanta had been one practical strike at the intersection of all the forces that oppress people, very literally, a strike at the militarizing forces of the US and Israel, along with the destruction of forests that keep Atlanta livable, the gentrifying forces in a majority Black neighborhood, and so on. As I've said, none of this is unique to Atlanta, and understanding other projects, including but not only cop cities, is important.

As you've mentioned, there are huge defense support networks everywhere. We should remember that these 61 defendants are scattered all over the place, and surrounding them are whole communities of people who are thrown into this, oftentimes with no legal background, looking to support their neighbor

become so bloated that any sane person can see how they are being misused. But that's just the thing: That's how they are designed to be used. So, while this case is definitely extreme, it is not unprecedented.

And the third thing that I think a lot of people are wanting legalistic frameworks to talk about, to get us all on the same page, is that the state has its own wagers and its own risk assessments. People's careers are riding on this. People have to answer to political parties, internal politics, and donors. Just like the example I gave of a different attorney dropping out. We see that they exist within a very, very subjective world, just like we do, and they respond to pressures other than "God-given law," which does not exist.

Jordan: One thing that I've noticed about this is that lawyers are trained to examine cases with a unit of analysis of a single defendant. So, a legalistic framework doesn't usually include things like the strength of a movement or the larger world of political context. One place I saw this is at an early legal seminar on RICO, not my lawyer, not lawyers representing clients, but lawyers were so confident that the many motions to challenge the indictment's legitimacy would be successful. Like saying the indictment is vague, poorly written, and poorly conceptualized. One lawyer was like, "This is a piece of trash." But since then, we've seen some of the emotions that people filed instead of being upheld, Judge Adams threw them out. Of course, Judge Farmer could reconsider. But I think the lawyers didn't predict that because they weren't taking into account all that the state has riding on this case, the careers and party politics and donors that they need to appease, and that larger context means that just focusing on the particular case and the particular defendant and the particular documents in that case misses big pieces of the story that impact the legal outcomes.

TFSR: So, what is the Imaginary Crime Tour? What is meant by the term imaginary crimes, and what role does imagination play in anti-repression?

Selena: So, the Imaginary Crimes Tour references the fact that all crimes are imaginary. What gets prosecuted? Who gets prosecuted? When they're prosecuted? None of this is objective. We know that the state takes power in this.

Also, it's just something that I've touched on a little bit, but RICO and domestic terrorism, in particular, are narrative-based rather than evidence-based. And this entire prosecution is based on what the state imagines happened. The indictment is evidence that they cannot conceive of a world where masses and masses of people are moved to act out of integrity rather than money or power. Anyone who had sat through the bond hearings was inundated with the most recent history of movement over the last 10 years. Facts and evidence of individual actors were not

based on association. The classic example to demonstrate what association means in this context is if you imagine a low-level mob employee catching a charge, then that has legal consequences for who is considered the mob boss, even if that mob boss technically did not do that crime. So it's really based on association, which is why I also think it's so important to say at the top of this that these co-defendants, many of them, the vast majority, did not even know each other before they were indicted on RICO.

Part of the name of this tour focuses on imaginary crimes, which I want to expand on a little bit later, this is one instance in which we see is actually the states imagining some dynamics, some relationships, literally conspiracy that does not exist, and basing their whole case off of this. A bit more about RICO law. We see this being used as a racist weapon during the war on drugs. The presentation that this tour will go over goes into a little bit of the history of RICO and sets a precedent for the fact that this has been an expanding law. This case is one more notch in the state's radical expansion of this. We are also familiar with the RICO law being used during the Green Scare, and it has continued to criminalize political movements even when there is no financial element or any conspiratorial association.

Again, association, despite the fact that many defendants do not know each other before getting charged with RICO, the indictment maintains that they share an association through—and this is where I encourage people to read the indictment because it is actually quite funny—but they share an association through anarchy, a term that the indictment seems to use a combination of Wikipedia and ChatGPT to define, and it covers having zines, participating in mutual aid, general anarchist ideology, which in the indictment they date back to the 1800s.

One defense lawyer who is not affiliated with this case made this a bit more understandable by thinking that if multiple cars driving on a highway are speeding—they're all technically breaking the law—if we think of all of those cars in conspiracy with one another by the fact that they are speeding. Or if a football fan is wearing a t-shirt of their favorite team, but that team has had a sports riot at their last football game, or what have you, charging that fan wearing the t-shirt with conspiracy.

So that's just a little bit on RICO. It is a daunting law, so I really appreciate it when lawyers put it in more layman's terms. So besides that, here are just other updates on the trial. The trial itself has not begun. There have been pre-trial hearings where we saw over 250 motions filed by the defense. And just to give a little insight into that, one of these motions that I found just very heartwarming was one of the defense lawyers put forward a motion for a stop work order when they were still constructing Cop City. So, there was a stop work order in order to preserve evidence. This was not successful, but I just find it very heartwarming how the defense is still focused on what we're focused on.

Another thing that people might have heard about the pre-trial hearings was that the Solidarity Fund in Atlanta had their money laundering charges dismissed, which is true and is a very, very good sign, especially because RICO is based off of criminal money laundering at its core. So those charges have been dismissed, but the Solidarity Fund is still facing RICO charges. The other thing that people might be familiar with from the pre-trial hearings is one defendant, defendant King, who is the only defendant who has been granted a speedy trial, but there still has not been a speedy trial for King. The state has missed multiple deadlines on this, King and their lawyer were put under a gag order, meaning that they could not discuss the case, and the defense filed a motion to dismiss the whole case based on the state's failure to carry out the speedy trial. We should understand that this still has not happened today, and it's in limbo. King, just like all the other defendants, is in limbo to see what the courts will rule.

Jordan: I want to add that filing a speedy trial is a very brave and cool move. King was a 19-year-old, and by filing for a speedy trial, they put themselves in a situation to go first in this very scary, unknown court process. It seems like filing speedy trials is like saying, "I don't need time to prep a defense. This is all bullsh*t, and I want to show the world." It took a lot of very quick lawyer wrangling and coordinating work with good attorneys. And if they ever do put together this trial, if the state ever does, which they are saying they plan to do, I hope that a lot of people show up to support them.

Selena: Just a few more notes on where we are in the trial. One element that I think maybe doesn't get discussed enough when we think of the state and its oppressive apparatus as the all-seeing Eye of Sauron or something is that there are many career law politicians who do not want to touch this case because it is too controversial. We saw this in 2023 when the DeKalb County District Attorney Sherry Boston announced that her office was withdrawing from the prosecution directly because this is too controversial. People do not want to touch it.

Judge Adams, who was the initial judge presiding over this case, moved to a different court, the family court, with the option to stay on as a judge, but eventually decided to leave and pass this off to a different judge entirely. It is still unclear why. We will probably never know why, but now we are waiting for Judge Farmer, who is set to rule over this case. He has yet to announce anything, and when he takes over, it's up for question what decisions that were made under Judge Adams, if these are going to stick, or if he's going to start from zero. It's unclear what this means for pre-trial hearings, what this means for King's speedy trial. And also, it feels like a farce to refer to this as a speedy trial because it has been anything but.

Selena: Yeah, and as a defendant, I want to share that where things are at holds a lot of uncertainty, and it makes it really hard to do things like sign a lease or commit to long-term projects in my job and life. At any point, I can be summoned to Atlanta. And definitely, Adams was like, "You have to come in person for these hearings." Notably, they had a hearing the day before Thanksgiving, and they made everybody who filed that motion show up in person. So, at any point, I can just be summoned to Atlanta, and we just don't know when the trial is going to happen. Different lawyers have different guesses, and all the lawyers sound so confident, but the only things that we know are that the trial has not yet happened and that the charges are not dropped. And so this means for my life that I need to be ready to head down there whenever it is that they summon me, and that I'm hoping a fair number of supporters are also ready to come down to do court support whenever that day may be.

TFSR: So, while challenging repression within a legal framework is obviously sensible, there's a self-defense element to it, what does a legalistic framework misunderstand about the way that power operates, the way that movement exists, and what's at stake with things like struggles to stop cop cities?

Selena: I have three thoughts on this, if that's okay. Again, I am not a lawyer, and I have not been to law school, but I think most people working within the legalistic realm of anti-repression work can tell you that lawyers are trained to focus on their clients and their client's immediate conditions. Which is good. We want good defense lawyers to keep our community members out of prison. But there's another element that lawyers are not always geared to think about, which is, in addition to keeping our community members out of prison, to also move forward and push the state back and challenge their power. So, we often see people working together in a collective defense.

I know J20 defendants are a really common reference for this. Rather than each individual defendant taking a plea deal, which early plea deals might appear as a safer option, we know through our history that a collective defense, in the end, actually keeps everybody safer, and it also sends a message that next time the state tries to do something like this, tries to expand RICO, tries this vast overreach of power, that it is unsuccessful, that individuals are not going to cave, that solidarity actually does keep us safer and maintain more collective power for the future.

The second thing I want to say is that I think a lot of very well-intentioned legal experts have protested this trial as extreme overreach, and it's important to remember that this is how the court system works. The state tries new cases, looking to expand criminalization, and repressive laws like RICO or domestic terrorism